

## **Simcoe Hall's After-School Program Handbook for Grades 1 – 8 2024 – 2025**

Simcoe Hall's After-School Program is designed to offer your child a rich blend of fun and learning, with activities and support to enhance their after-school experience. Our program runs for 10 months, averaging less than **\$1.50 per day**. This affordability is designed to support families facing socio-economic challenges, making our program accessible while providing exceptional value. We prioritize service to neighbourhoods in Oshawa that are most in need, but our program is open to all families within the community.

Our dedicated staff creates a consistent and nurturing environment where children can thrive and fully benefit from their after-school experience. Our array of enrichments includes Fitkidz (promoting health and fitness), Homework Support, Arts & Crafts, Cooking Classes, Literacy Club, and Workshops, offering a chance to both socialize with peers and forge new friendships. Throughout the year, we've lined up special events such as themed days, field trips, Holiday events, and guest visits. As they arrive, participants receive a wholesome snack and are treated to a nutritious complimentary dinner daily.

Our After-School Program operates in a fast-paced, sensory-rich environment that can be highly stimulating. Please consider this to ensure it aligns with your child's needs and preferences. We welcome children and youth with disabilities to join the program at a level that suits their abilities and access needs. Participants must be able to engage independently or provide their own caregiver if needed.

In addition to our After School Program, Simcoe Hall hosts a variety of year-round programs (individual registrations required):

**Food Bank:** Support for those in need.

**Seniors Program:** Engaging weekly activities and support for seniors.

**Holiday Food Hamper & Toy Program:** Special assistance in November and December.

**March Break Day Camp:** Exciting activities during March break.

**Backpack Support:** Assistance in July and August for essential school supplies.

**Sun Fun Summer Day Camp:** Fun and engaging summer activities.

**Simcoe Hall Contact Information:**

**Address:** 387 Simcoe Street South, Oshawa ON L1H 4J2

**Phone:** (905) 728-7525

**Program Staff Email:** kids@simcoehall.com

**Program Coordinator:** samantha@simcoehall.com

**Executive Director:** tiffany@simcoehal.com

**Website:** www.simcoehall.com

## **Simcoe Hall's Mission, Vision, and Core Values**

### **CORE VALUES**

Our core values influence our decisions, guide our actions and determine our culture. These values are: compassion and caring, health and wellness, integrity and responsibility, respect, and inclusion, as well as interdependence and community. We strive to make a difference in our community through everything we do.

### **MISSION AND VISION**

We strive to provide wellness opportunities through our food bank and programs to serve individuals, children, and families who experience financial and social challenges. We aspire to be a part of a community that allows everyone to experience and lead healthy, meaningful, and socially responsible lives.

### **HISTORY OF SIMCOE HALL**

Simcoe Hall was founded in 1935, by the Women's Welfare League in response to human and health conditions during the 1930s. They stayed active in the 1940s and expanded their vision for a fair and equitable community in the 1950s. The Women's League started what is now known as the Grandview Children's Centre and Eastview Boys and Girls Club.

## **After-School Program Philosophy**

We believe that all children are unique in their way. Children must be provided with a stimulating environment to grow socially, physically, mentally, and emotionally. This is why we are dedicated to providing a safe and nurturing child and youth-centered space that will support your child's development as they engage in new experiences, while also encouraging their independence.

We believe in providing children with the tools and resources needed to foster self-exploration, play, and inquiry. We also strongly believe that involvement from local community partners can support children and their families through way of new experiences and community-based resources. Our skilled staff provides a supportive, creative, and safe environment for all children that will build opportunities for positive growth and development.

## **Hours of Operation**

The After School Program begins at 3:15 pm and will remain open until 6:15 pm Monday through Friday. Due to our Holiday Hamper Program, the After School Program will not have access to the gymnasium for the month of December (subject to change).

Simcoe Hall reserves the right to announce early closures at any time due to adverse weather conditions or unforeseen circumstances that could impact the safety of our staff and participants. In such cases, we will provide notifications to caregivers via phone and/or email, and inform Village Union Public School if the Walking Bus Program is affected.

Simcoe Hall's After School Program currently aligns with the Durham District School Board instructional day calendar. For your reference, a list of scheduled closures is provided below:

**After-School Program Closure Dates**

<b>Statuary Holidays</b>	<b>CLOSED</b>
Thanksgiving: Monday, October 14 <sup>th</sup> 2024	Friday, November 1 <sup>st</sup> 2025
Family Day: Monday, February 17 <sup>th</sup> 2025	Friday, November 15 <sup>th</sup> 2025
Good Friday: Friday, April 18 <sup>th</sup> 2025	Friday, December 20 <sup>th</sup> 2024 to January 3 <sup>rd</sup> 2025
Easter Monday: Monday, April 21 <sup>st</sup> 2025	Friday, January 25 <sup>th</sup> 2025
Victoria Day: Monday, May 19 <sup>th</sup> 2025	Friday, March 7 <sup>th</sup> 2025
	Monday, March 31 <sup>st</sup> 2025
	Friday, June 6 <sup>th</sup> 2025

**Member Illness**

If a child has any symptoms of a contagious illness they will need to be kept at home until there are no signs of symptoms. If a child does not attend school they are not allowed to attend our program. Should a child become ill while they are in attendance, we will separate them from other children and attempt to contact a parent/guardian and or emergency contact for immediate pick-up.

**Change of Information**

Please inform us as soon as possible of any changes to your registration details, such as address updates or changes to authorized pick-up persons.

**Reporting Absence**

It is essential to notify the program if your child will be absent, including the reason for their absence. Please contact us as soon as possible to ensure we can manage and account for your child's absence effectively.

**Arrival and Pickup Procedures**

If your child will be arriving at the program after 4:00 p.m., please notify program staff as soon as possible. This helps us ensure we have an accurate headcount for meal preparations and any activities planned. Your timely notification is greatly appreciated.

Simcoe Hall's doors remain locked at all times. When arriving to pick up your child, please ring the doorbell at the entrance of Celina/Fisher. Unless otherwise arranged, children will not be released to any person other than those who are listed on their registration form. Members 12 years of age and over will be permitted to walk home alone *only* if signed permission by a caregiver has been completed and is on file.

### **Late Pickup Policy**

We understand that situations may arise, causing caregivers to be late. In the event you are running late to pick up your child, please call Simcoe Hall (905) 728-7525 as soon as possible to notify staff about your late arrival. Late pick-ups will result in a **\$1.00 a minute up to \$60.00. Late fees must be paid upon arrival.** If the late fee is not paid within the first 24 hours, then an additional \$5.00 will be added until the fee is paid. Reoccurring late pickups may result in termination of enrollment.

If the parent/guardian/emergency contact is unavailable an hour after the program ends, we will contact the appropriate Children's Aid Society and follow their instructions.

### **Field Trips and Community Walks**

Field trips and community walks offer valuable experiences for children and allow staff to extend program activities beyond Simcoe Hall.

For field trips, parents/guardians will be required to complete a permission form to grant consent for their child to participate in the activity. Community walks, which may be a regular part of the program, do not require a separate permission form.

### **Lost and Found Items**

**Reporting Lost Items:** Contact our program staff and visit Simcoe Hall during operational hours to claim lost items. Unclaimed items will be donated at the end of each month.

### **Meal and Snack Program**

Simcoe Hall offers a snack and complimentary meal program at no additional cost. Children receive healthy snacks upon arrival and dinner is served at 5:30 PM, following Canada's Food Guide: Healthy Eating Recommendations.

Generous donations from our food bank and community partners support our meal program. A monthly menu will be created and shared with participants at the beginning of each month, though please note that the menu may change.

We generally discourage sending food from home to accommodate children with allergies and food restrictions. However, exceptions can be made for families with children who have specific dietary needs or complex allergies. Please note that due to the presence of our food bank, we cannot guarantee an allergen-free environment. We are committed to minimizing risks and will take reasonable precautions to manage potential allergens.

## Communication and Concerns

Each month, a newsletter will be emailed and/or sent home to participants at the beginning of the month. This newsletter will contain essential information about program updates, closures, and memos to keep everyone informed.

We encourage parents/guardians to actively discuss their child(ren)'s experiences with our program. Open communication with program staff is key to ensuring a positive and comfortable experience for your child. Please feel free to ask questions during pickup or contact the Program Coordinator by phone or email if any concerns arise.

We ask that you avoid discussing concerns in front of children, as this can create a negative atmosphere. Our staff is committed to maintaining a safe and supportive environment and will address any issues at an appropriate time and place.

**Escalation of Issues or Concerns:** Where parents/guardians are not satisfied with the outcome of a concern, they may escalate the issue to the Program Coordinator and/or the Executive Director.

**Confidentiality:** All issues and concerns will be handled with the utmost confidentiality, and every effort will be made to protect the privacy of parents/guardians, children, staff, and volunteers. Information will only be disclosed if required for legal reasons.

## Technology and Cell Phone Use Policy

In alignment with the Ministry of Education's policy on cell phone use, participants in our after-school program are no longer permitted to use their cell phones during scheduled activities and instructional time. While participants may keep their phones with them, their use will only be allowed if explicitly permitted by program staff. Phones must remain on silent or vibrate to avoid disruption. *Simcoe Hall is not liable for any lost, stolen or damaged property, including cell phones.*

### **Benefits of Limiting Cell Phone Use:**

1. **Increased Focus:** Fewer distractions help participants stay engaged and benefit more from the program.
2. **Better Social Interaction:** Encourages face-to-face communication, strengthening peer relationships and teamwork.
3. **Enhanced Safety:** Reduces risks by limiting access to social media and protecting participant privacy.
4. **Fewer Distractions:** Minimizes interruptions, improving concentration and productivity.
5. **Greater Mindfulness:** Promotes being present and appreciating program activities more fully.

We have a zero-tolerance policy for the use of social media apps during program hours. This policy supports our commitment to maintaining a safe and respectful environment for all participants.

## Behaviour Guidelines

We aim to create a positive and supportive environment for all participants. Open communication with leaders about any issues is encouraged, and participants are expected to support each other, particularly in addressing bullying.

### **Expectations of Participants:**

- **Respect and Kindness:** Treat everyone and the environment with respect and kindness.
- **Safe Use:** Use facilities and equipment safely and appropriately.
- **No Violence:** Adhere to our “no violence” policy to ensure everyone’s safety.
- **Respectful Language:** Use appropriate and respectful language at all times.
- **Follow Instructions:** Listen to and follow staff instructions to support a safe environment.
- **Food and Drink:** Refrain from chewing gum or bringing outside food and drink, unless specified.

### **Prohibited Behaviour:**

- **Endangering Safety:** Endangering the health and safety of others.
- **Theft or Damage:** Theft or damage to property or personal belongings.
- **Unauthorized Departure:** Leaving the program without permission.
- **Disruption:** Persistent disruption of program activities.
- **Rule Refusal:** Refusal to follow behaviour guidelines or rules.
- **Profanity and Obscenity:** Frequent use of profanity, vulgarity, or obscenity.
- **Disrespectful Behavior:** Displaying rude, aggressive, discriminating, or disrespectful behaviour.

**Bullying Prevention:** We are committed to preventing and addressing bullying. Participants are encouraged to report any bullying behaviour they encounter or witness to staff immediately. All reports will be taken seriously and addressed promptly.

**Reporting Issues:** Participants should inform a staff member if they encounter any issues or feel uncomfortable. Staff are available to support and address concerns as they arise.

### **Consequences for Non-Compliance:**

- **Early Pick-Up:** Call home for early pick-up.
- **Suspension:** Suspension from the program.
- **Termination:** Termination from the program.

Maintaining a safe and respectful environment is crucial for the success of our program. We appreciate your cooperation and commitment to upholding these guidelines.

## **Accidents and Incidents**

Children’s natural curiosity and active play can sometimes lead to minor injuries such as cuts, scrapes, and bruises. Engaging in risky play—exciting and adventurous forms of play with unpredictable outcomes and potential for physical injury—is a normal and important part of child development.

**Importance of Risky Play:** Risky play is crucial for children’s growth as it helps them develop resilience, problem-solving skills, and physical coordination. By navigating challenges and exploring their limits in a controlled environment, children learn to assess risks, build confidence, and enhance their ability to handle future challenges.

### **Procedure for Accidents:**

#### **1. Documentation:**

- Staff will complete an Accident/Incident form to document any injuries or incidents. This form includes details about the event and the actions taken.
- The incident will be discussed with the child’s parents/caregiver, who can request a copy of the report at any time.

#### **2. Response to Serious Incidents:**

- In the event of a serious incident, staff will respond based on the situation’s severity.
- This may include contacting emergency services (911) or reaching out to the child’s designated emergency contacts for medical evaluation.
- All staff members are trained in Standard First Aid and CPR to handle emergencies effectively.

## **Damages to Simcoe Hall Property**

Participants who cause damage to Simcoe Hall’s property by abuse of equipment will be responsible for compensation for all damages to equipment/supplies. The participant’s parents/guardians will be expected to reimburse Simcoe Hall for any damages that occurred and will be billed accordingly. Depending on the frequency and severity of the conduct, further steps will be taken that may result in the loss of activities/materials, outings, and permanent removal of the After-School Program.

## Walking Bus Program - Village Union P.S

Two staff members will be waiting for participants outside of Village Union's office doors from **3:05 pm – 3:20 pm Monday to Friday**. At 3:20 pm, the children and staff will proceed to Simcoe Hall; only children with signed permission forms and who are with the group before 3:20 pm will be walking with the staff. This program is weather-permitted. In the event of inclement weather, the Walking Bus Program will be cancelled. Upon cancellation, Village Union P.S. will be notified as well as the parents/guardians of children who utilize the Walking Bus Program. It is the responsibility of the parent/caregiver to inform their child's teacher and administration that they will be utilizing this program.

Please review these important safety rules with your child(ren):

1. **Listen to and respect all staff members** as they are here to ensure everyone's safety.
2. **Be punctual for the walking bus** to help maintain a smooth and timely departure.
3. **No eating on the walking bus**, snacks will be served upon arrival at Simcoe Hall.
4. **Stay on the sidewalk** and cross with the group only at designated crosswalks.
5. **Walk directly to Simcoe Hall with the group** and avoid making additional stops along the way.
6. **Refrain from pushing, shoving, or any form of physical contact** that could be unsafe.
7. **Keep personal belongings secured** and avoid distractions that might compromise safety.
8. **Notify a staff member immediately** if you need assistance or feel unwell during the walk.
9. **Understand that Simcoe Hall is not responsible** if the Walking Bus is missed.
10. **Note:** Bikes, scooters, rollerblades, and other wheeled devices are not allowed.

To ensure the safety of all participants, especially when walking a large group of children down Simcoe St., we have implemented a **THREE-strike** policy. This policy is in place to maintain a secure environment for everyone involved. If a participant does not adhere to the safety guidelines and rules of the Walking Bus Program, they will be subject to this policy. Accumulating three strikes will result in removal from the program, as we prioritize the well-being and safety of all participants. Please note that refunds are not applicable in such cases.



## Membership Fees

### **After-School Program Membership:**

\$300.00 per school year. We offer two payment options for your convenience:

### **Payment Options**

1. **Option 1: Full Payment**
  - **Amount:** \$300.00
  - **Due:** Upon registration
2. **Option 2: Installments**
  - **Initial Payment:** \$150.00 due upon registration
  - **Second Payment:** \$150.00 due two months after the initial payment

### **Walking Bus – Village Union Public School Only:**

\$60.00 for the year (Payment in full upon registration required)

### **Payment Methods:**

1. **Cash**
2. **E-transfer:** Please send to **etransfersh@gmail.com** and use the password **afterschool**. Include a memo stating that the payment is for the After-School Program and your child's name.
3. **Credit Card:** Please note a 3.40% service fee will apply.

Due to the reduced costs of our program, we do not offer subsidies or prorated fees. However, if you encounter financial challenges or have special circumstances, please speak directly with the program coordinator to explore available options and discuss how we might assist you.

## Late Payment Fee Policy

To ensure the smooth operation of our program, we ask that all payments be made by the agreed-upon due dates. A late fee of **\$15.00** will be applied for payments received more than **ten days** after the due date. This fee helps cover the administrative costs associated with managing late payments.

### **Consequences for Continued Late Payment:**

If payments remain outstanding after **ten days**, your child may not be permitted to attend the After-School Program until the payment and any applicable late fees are settled.

### **Communication:**

If you anticipate any issues with meeting the payment deadline, please contact us as soon as possible to discuss your situation. We are committed to working with families to address any financial concerns.